

**SUMMARY OF THE  
ACCREDITING AUTHORITY COMMITTEE MEETING  
NOVEMBER 6, 2002**

The Accrediting Authority Committee of the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC) met on Wednesday, November 6, 2002, at 2:30 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST). Chairperson Mr. Louis Johnson of Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality led the meeting. A list of action items is given in Attachment A. A list of participants is given in Attachment B. The purpose of the meeting was to *prepare for the committee's session at the upcoming Eighth NELAC Interim Meeting (NELAC 8i).*

**INTRODUCTION**

Mr. Johnson opened the meeting with a roll call. He announced that Ms. Jeanne Hankins, NELAP Director, will retire from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) at the end of calendar year 2002. Mr. Johnson briefly reviewed the teleconference agenda. Discussion of membership in the Institute for National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation (INELA) was added to the teleconference agenda at a member's request. The committee then moved to discussion of the teleconference agenda items.

**NELAC 8i**

After moderate discussion, the committee agreed to present the issue of the time line for renewal of NELAP accrediting authority accreditation in a formal and orderly fashion. They agreed to use a spreadsheet and Gant chart prepared by Mr. Scott Hoatson as a basis for the presentation, with an orderly review of the chapters of the NELAC Standard. It was agreed that the spreadsheet would be projected from a computer during the meeting for all attendees to see. It was also agreed that Mr. Hoatson would make changes to the spreadsheet as suggestions for changes were offered so that all in attendance could see the impact of the changes to the time line. Mr. Johnson indicated that he would bring a supply of hard copies of the spreadsheet and Gant chart to be used as handouts during the meeting.

It was noted that the committee would probably receive input from stakeholders, especially the accrediting authorities and EPA Region 2, at NELAC 8i. The committee agreed to request from each individual requesting a change to the time line a justification for the change and a concrete suggestion for the change. The committee agreed that their strategy for addressing the time line issue would be to listen and record suggestions at NELAC 8i and then regroup as a committee to reach consensus on changes.

There was some discussion of alternate strategies if no concrete suggestions for changes were offered at NELAC 8i. It was suggested that the NELAC Standard include language permitting extensions of the time line on a case-by-case basis with the mutual agreement of the NELAP Director and the accrediting authority in question.

## **COMMITTEE FUTURE PLANS**

Mr. Johnson indicated that the committee's agenda for discussions after NELAC 8i includes evaluation of NELAP assessors by an evaluating team. Noting that uniform evaluation of assessors is an important issue, he suggested that the committee would propose changes related to this issue for conference vote at NELAC 9.

## **MEMBERSHIP IN INELA**

Ms. Sharon Mertens noted that NELAC committees will transition to INELA after NELAC 9i. She asked if all current NELAC Accrediting Authority Committee members would transition to INELA. Mr. Johnson noted that he and Mr. Hoatson would rotate off the committee in June of 2003. The committee agreed that they should be thinking of potential new members for the committee. There was some discussion of the point at which the committee would function as both a NELAC committee and an INELA committee. There was also some discussion of conflict of interest for accrediting authorities as members of INELA. The committee agreed to defer further discussion of the issue until after NELAC 8i.

## **CONCLUSION**

The committee agreed to meet for a social outing at NELAC 8i in Santa Fe. Mr. Johnson then recapped the committee's agenda for NELAC 8i, which will include an open forum for discussion of changes to the time line for renewal of NELAP accrediting authority accreditation, a brief discussion of evaluation of NELAP assessors, and an opportunity for stakeholders to suggest other changes and raise issues of new business. Mr. Johnson noted that neither Mr. Stephen Arms nor Mr. Larry Penfold would be able to attend NELAC 8i, and that the committee would, therefore, have four contributors and four voting members in attendance. He reviewed the one action item resulting from this teleconference. There being no more new business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned shortly after 3:00 p.m. EST. The committee's next meeting will be a face-to-face meeting at NELAC 8i in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

**ACTION ITEMS  
ACCREDITING AUTHORITY COMMITTEE MEETING  
NOVEMBER 6, 2002**

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Date to be Completed</b>
1.	Mr. Johnson will provide hard copies of Mr. Hoatson's spreadsheet and Gant chart for use as handouts during the committee's session at NELAC 8i.	NELAC 8i

**PARTICIPANTS  
ACCREDITING AUTHORITY COMMITTEE MEETING  
NOVEMBER 6, 2002**

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